

SHRI BUTA SINGH: The hon. Member would agree with me that for some time past now we have changed the whole concept. We have now decided that we will have high density houses, where more people could be accommodated within the same place. This has resulted really in a reduction in land prices in Delhi, which should be complimented.

I agree with the hon. Member that the shortage of land in Delhi has become very very acute. I propose to hold a meeting with the hon. Members especially those from Delhi to have their views and co-operation on the future development of Delhi. As I mentioned and a little while ago by Shri K C Pande, the 20-Point programme of the Government would serve the people of Delhi. We would welcome suggestions from all Members of Parliament especially from Delhi, and we will seek their co-operation to see that the development of Delhi takes place, according to the prescribed norms and rules.

Meeting of State Food and Civil Supplies Ministers

*168. **SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL:** Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that a meeting of State Ministers of Civil Supplies was held recently with the Central Minister in New Delhi in November, 1983;

(b) if so, whether the working of the fair price shops in the States and also the items catered by them was considered at the meeting and if so, brief details thereof;

(c) whether the meeting considered the desirability of expanding such fair price shops in the difficult and rural areas with more items so that the benefit may reach to the population who are cut off and are being exploited by petty traders; and

(d) the decision taken in this regard, if any ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS AND MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (DR. M.S. SANJEEVI RAO) :

(a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The fourth Meeting of the Advisory Council on Public Distribution, of which the Civil Supplies Ministers of States/Union Territories are its members, was held on the 7th of November, 1983. At this meeting the expansion of the public Distribution System through opening of more fair price shops, including mobile shops, in the far flung areas and widening the 'scope of coverage of commodities distributed through the Public Distribution System, *inter alia* was reviewed. Keeping in view the important role played by the Public Distribution System in the supply of essential commodities of mass consumption to people at reasonable prices, the general consensus in the Meeting was that the base of the Public Distribution System should be strengthened through planned expansion, proper management and its accessibility to remote and sparsely populated areas. The State Governments and Union Administrations should make efforts to open more fair price shops to achieve the norm of 2000 units per fair price shop. For making fair price shops viable, State Governments and Union Territory Administrations, may include in addition to the essential commodities, for which supplies are made by the Central Government, as many items as could be possible to widen the commodity coverage.

SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL: In part 'C' of my question I have asked whether the meeting considered the desirability of expanding such fair price shops in the difficult and rural areas. In reply to that, the Minister has generalised the problem and not given any specific plan. If any plan has been discussed in the meeting, let the Minister indicate that and then the answer will be complete.

As you are aware, the public distribution system needs to be strengthened and more shops are to be opened in rural and difficult areas. What steps are being taken by the Central Government of making these fair price shops viable ? If viability is not coming, then how will the Central Government ensure more items to the fair price shops and see that they work properly in rural and urban areas ? How will the Government arrange to distribute essential items to the people in general in those areas where there are no fair price shops ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD) : Exactly these are the issues that we take up in the meetings that we hold with the State Supply and Food Ministers. Regarding viability of the fair price shops, we supply seven items from the Central Government. It is true that viability possibly cannot come out of these seven items. That is why it has been left to the State Governments to include as many items as they like from their own procurement for disbursal from these shops. These are States like West Bengal, Kerala, Orissa which have included a large number of items apart from the seven that we give from the Central Government, in the fair Price shops. Therefore the viability of the fair price shops can come only when the State Governments include the items which they consider they can procure and distribute through them.

We also discuss about the difficult and non-accessible areas. We are emphasising on the State Governments that they should cover such areas which are still not covered by the fair price shops. This point was considered in the fourth meeting also. We hope that the State Governments which are responsible for this will fix up their targets for opening fair price shops in such areas and we also hope that they are taking action in this regard.

SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL : Rotten foodgrains are supplied through fair price shops because the shopkeepers do not have the option of selection. Will the Government ensure supply of good quality wheat through fair price shops to the consumers ?

The Central Government has allotted levy, sugar to the Government of Rajasthan from Maharashtra. But for the last six months not a grain of sugar has been lifted by the concerned authorities. In such a situation, how would the fair price shops distribute levy sugar to the consumers. Will the Government look into it?

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD: Whenever complaints come about the quality of the foodstuff, there is a joint inspection by the representatives of the State Government and the FCI. The State Government has

got the right to reject the foodstuff if the quality is below what is prescribed by us. Therefore, there is enough precaution taken and the State Governments before taking foodgrains from the FCI, have to satisfy themselves that this quality is good for consumption. Secondly, after that is done, the State Government have got there, some were in the *halkas* and some were attached to the fair price shops, the vigilance committees to look into the complaints. If such complaints come from the States, I would also request the hon. Members that they should complain to the State Governments. I must admit that it is not possible for the Central Government all over the country to see what every fair price shop is doing. Therefore, every Member of the State Legislative Assembly or State Government has to see that in their areas quality is distributed and secondly, where it is not available, why it is not available. Sir, from here what we do is, as I told you, that we call the State Food Ministers, we discuss with them about the quality and about the expansion of the fair price shops. That is how the Central Government monitors about these things.

SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL : Sir, my second question is: Why levy sugar is not lifted by the Rajasthan Government. (*Interruptions.*) Recently the levy sugar is distributed through the fair price shops so that it is a very low price sugar and the consumers are denied their rights. The Minister may kindly reply.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER : Prof. Kurien.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: The hon. Minister said that the State Governments have decided to strengthen the public distribution system. That is very good. But you know that Kerala is having a very effective public distribution system and at the time when southern food zone was abolished, the Central Government had given assurance that Kerala's requirement of food would be met. And in spite of the fact that we are having an effective public distribution system, we are not given adequate quantity of rice to be supplied through the ration shops. At the same time the Government is not permitted to buy rice from the surplus States. I would like to ask the Minister: When you are not able fulfil your commitment of supplying

sufficient rice, why don't you allow States like Kerala to purchase rice from other States which are having surplus ?

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD: Sir, so far as the supply from our side is concerned, I think we have done the maximum for the Kerala State. (*Interruptions*). Hon. Members may not be satisfied and may like to say that they should have more. I have already said—I cannot say about individual States—that this is not a question of the States demanding as much as they wish and the Central Government supplying them all that they need. As I have said, the food management policy of the Central Government is depending upon what the State Governments themselves manage, what is the availability in the market and what is available to the Central Government which is procured from the surplus States in the country which are few and therefore, it is not that the Central Government do not want to give it, but it depends upon these factors, as I have said. Under those conditions we have given maximum to the State Government of Kerala. The second point.....

(*Interruptions.*)

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Why don't you allow the State agencies to purchase.

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD: That is what I am telling about.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Shrimati Sushila Gopalan.

SHRIMATI SUSHILA GOPALAN: It is correct that the State Governments have taken the responsibility of the public distribution system. But many of the items have to be procured by the Central Government and it has to be given. The seven items which are allotted for procurement by the Central Government itself is not enough. At least 14 essential items should be procured by the Government and given to the State Governments. Not only that. At present when the harvesting season is going on—here you will see that a question from Mr. A.K.Roy is there wherein he said that there is a fall in price and the farmers are not getting proper prices. On the other side,—people are getting them at a high price. So, if you

have to procure the essential things properly the wholesale trade of essential articles, I mean, foodstuffs, should be taken over. That is one of the major things to be done by the Central Government.

MR. SPEAKER: The time will be up now.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRIMATI SUSHILA GOPALAN: I am coming to that. And whatever is agreed by the Government to allot to the State Governments, that should be allotted. With regard to Kerala as you say they are giving 10,000 tonnes less than what is to be given. I want to know from the Government whether they are prepared to stand by the commitment to allot the particular quantity to the State Government.

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD: I have already replied to this question—that we are doing as far as possible to give maximum help to the different States. We have not made any discrimination so far as Kerala is concerned. There is nothing like 10,000 tonnes Less.

We have given them an allotment to the extent of 1,10,000 tonnes and we had also allowed them to purchase from the surplus States. Therefore, they are getting whatever is due.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Distress Sale of Paddy

*166. **SHRI A. K. ROY:** Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state :

(a) whether he is aware that the distress sale of paddy has started because of the non-starting of the procurement by the States ; and

(b) if so, facts in details and the steps taken in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD): (a) and (b) Central Government have not received any report of distress sale of paddy in the States. However, the FCI, State Governments, and their agencies, have already been directed to make necessary arrangements for procurement of paddy